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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 April 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ERDOS (Hungary)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open - on this Easter Monday - the 163rd meeting, the first of the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Let me begin our proceedings by extending a warm and sincere welcome to all delegations attending the 1992 session of the Commission. I have no doubt that every one shares my hope and expectation that the coming weeks will be characterized by a spirit of friendly cooperation and productive accommodation of views, both in this plenum and in the Working Groups.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt congratulations to the representatives of those States which became members of the United Nations only a short while ago, and which are attending a session of the Disarmament Commission for the first time. We offer them every assistance so that we can all benefit from their contribution to our common objectives.

May I also avail myself of this opportunity to tell representatives that I feel honoured and privileged to have been elected to this post, which I consider an opportunity for your Chairman and his country, the Republic of Hungary, better to serve this body and the community of nations. I shall do my best to help the Commission accomplish the tasks ahead of us.

At the Commission's organizational meeting I promised, and today I wish to repeat that promise, that I would try to live up to the high standards that my predecessor in this Chair, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, had established.

I also want to congratulate the Chairmen of the Working Groups, numbering three at present: Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden, Ambassador Prakash Shah of India and Ambassador Ricardo Luna of Peru.

(The Chairman)

As regards the fourth Working Group, I have to inform the Commission that consultations are continuing within the Group of African States with the aim of nominating a colleague from the African Group to head that Working Group, which is on science and technology. I wish to express my confidence that our African colleagues will be able to come up with a person who will be able to lead the Working Group on the question of science and technology throughout this substantive session. I also appeal to our African colleagues to wind up their consultations as soon as possible and inform us of the results, because we are fully aware that the key to progress in our work is held by the four Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies.

It is a particular pleasure for me to welcome in our midst the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky. He has been known for long for his conviction about, and devotion to, the cause of promoting the arduous process of arms control and disarmament. On behalf of the members of the Commission, and also on my own behalf, I wish him well in his new and important post. We all look forward to profiting from his guidance, and also from the invaluable assistance of his colleagues in the Secretariat.

The 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is opening at a particular phase of developments and transformations on the international scene, which constitutes a watershed period in the history of the United Nations as well. The momentous events that are taking place in the world and the enormous challenges accompanying them raise ever-new hopes and ever-new frustrations. I feel confident that the members of the Commission are fully determined to exploit every chance offered by the improving international climate, and will not be deterred by occasional difficulties.

(The Chairman)

We may say with all justification that the world is moving closer to a new quality of international relations. However, events last year in the Persian Gulf, and more recent events in Europe and elsewhere, serve as a constant reminder that the new world, the long-envisaged system of collective security do not come into existence by themselves, and even progress along the road does not automatically guarantee the maintenance of peace, security and justice.

In his inaugural statement before the General Assembly, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, spoke about four basic issues which - in his view - "confront the international community" (A/46/PV.59, p. 12). Now that we are about to embark on a new attempt to promote solutions to some of the outstanding issues, we should recall that the very first of those issues

> "is the need to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in conformity with the Charter". (ibid.)

It would be very difficult, I would say even impossible, not to agree fully with the Secretary-General when he emphasizes the need to find "adequate means to defuse" crises and to "prevent their escalation" (ibid.). What better, more effective and practical means are there to achieve those goals than measures of arms control, arms limitation and disarmament? Those are the issues on which the United Nations Disarmament Commission is mandated to conduct in-depth deliberations with a view to finding and submitting concrete recommendations. Those are the issues which the four Working Groups are clearly mandated to deal with.

The new and fundamentally reformed Disarmament Commission is not really a product of the improved international climate, but was actually born parallel

(The Chairman)

to it. The 1991 session was in fact the first substantive session where all the elements of the reform programme were put into practice. While not every one of the four substantive agenda items served equally well the declared objective of conducting in-depth deliberations and achieving concrete recommendations, the work of the Disarmament Commission as a whole is considered to be successful. Considerable progress was achieved on a number of important and often contested items, and thus there is every hope that concrete results will not evade us this year.

One of the four items is already in its third year. Consequently, Working Group I, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Hyltenius, will have to launch a real, concentrated effort to come up with a final report on objective information on military matters. The Commission, and thus the Working Group, is expected to draw up relevant principles and guidelines, and, preferably, a set of concrete recommendations.

The other three Working Groups started their deliberations only last year, and reached agreement on compilations of various elements which now serve as fairly solid ground to build on. With further efforts and full utilization of the time available to the Groups, the already existing material could very well be developed to a level that would permit a final assault in 1993, the third and last year for those agenda items.

There is general agreement among delegations that the short period at our disposal must be fully utilized. Since all the four subsidiary bodies have already passed the stage where the ground has been broken, work in the Groups should not start anew from scratch. Instead of general discussions, they all have to focus on substantive questions. A short recapitulation of the situation is, of course, normal and may prove to be useful, but it should not

(The Chairman)

take up more than the first one or two meetings. The Chairman's papers also serve as very pertinent ground for a quick start, and the fairly great number of working papers also help in that endeavour.

In great moments of historic transformation, fundamental changes are required of individuals, delegations and governments alike. Changes in attitudes, changes in concepts and also changes in negotiating methods are called for. Instead of repeating fossilized views, delegations are now invited to concentrate more on the areas, no matter how narrow some of them might seem at first, where views offer a chance of possible agreement.

In the second year of this reinvigorated Disarmament Commission, we all should show signs of our ability to live up to the new expectations and requirements of our era. Today, the questions on our agenda have all left the realm of impossible dreams and have already become an organic part of feasible and realistic objectives. The 1992 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is here to prove this.

I now call on Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Mr. PETROVSKY: I should like to start by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for the words of welcome you spoke in connection with my appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is both an honour and a great responsibility to deal with disarmament issues at the time of the creation of the new world order, which is the system of peace, security and cooperation based on the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mr. Petrovsky)

The world is emerging today from the shadows of past confrontations and moving progressively towards a new situation characterized by the increasing hopes for greater peace and security. Against the backdrop of this new situation, it is indeed incumbent upon the international community to seize this opportunity accorded by the United Nations for contributing towards the promotion and the enhancement of this process. The momentum that has been generated should not be allowed to dissipate but should serve the unique role that the world Organization can play in promoting disarmament and preserving peace. In this context, the full range of the disarmament machinery of the United Nations - the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and other bodies - should be utilized in a more constructive and innovative manner to advance these objectives further as well as to improve the machinery and procedures for dealing with disarmament questions. It is imperative that these bodies direct their efforts in a manner commensurate with the new challenges and demands that confront the United Nations. I assure the Commission that we in the Secretariat are ready to assist it in searching for solutions to problems that may arise in the course of its deliberations at this session.

(Mr. Petrovsky)

I am confident that in this spirit this body will also endeavour to tackle the important issues that are now before it. As is generally recognized, the Disarmament Commission is a specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific and priority disarmament issues leading to the submission of specific recommendations.

In this regard, the four substantive items that form part of your present agenda call for a renewed sense of dedication and determination that will enable the Commission not only to conclude its work on each of those items within the prescribed time-frame, but also to make practical recommendations and achieve tangible results as we re-examine traditional approaches to multilateral activities.

Mr. Chairman, as the Commission embarks on this crucial task under your able guidance, I should like to take this opportunity to extend the best wishes of the Secretary-General and all the staff to all of you for the successful completion of your work.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members of the Commission may recall, at our organizational session, held on 3 December last year, we tentatively approved the provisional agenda before the Commission. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda before it, contained in document A/CN.10/L.30.

The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, in 1990 the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus a text on reform measures, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was contained in document A/CN.10/137. The implementation of these reform measures was duly reflected in the organizational arrangements for this current substantive session at the Commission's organizational session in December last year.

Let me recall these arrangements for you. They included: firstly, the approval of the provisional agenda; secondly, the establishment of four working groups on the four substantive agenda items; thirdly, the appointment of chairmen for the working groups - here again, I have to remind you of the pending decision of the African Group on the fourth working group -; fourthly, decision on the date and duration of the 1992 substantive session; and, fifthly, a general programme of work for the current session.

In complying with the spirit of the reform programme, chairmen of the established working groups have effectively utilized the off-session period for various types of informal consultations on their respective agenda items among the interested delegations, and I am convinced that these pre-session consultations have greatly facilitated the substantive work of the current session.

In view of the limited time available to the Commission, it was a general understanding that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. In this regard, four meetings are allocated to such purposes, as indicated in the general programme of work and the weekly timetable which have been

(The Chairman)

circulated. I would urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat as soon as possible. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today.

I should also like to ask that each delegation, before making a statement in plenary meeting, provide the Secretariat with 25 copies of the text.

If I hear no requests to speak, and if there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As to the allocation of time for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility will, for practical purposes, be observed, and the Secretariat will issue a weekly timetable for the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the chairmen of the working groups. However, a general programme of work for the entire session (A/CN.10/1992/CRP.1) has been agreed and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, obviously subject to further ajustments as necessary.

The Secretariat has prepared and distributed the working timetable for the first week of the session as an experimental exercise, in accordance with a decision by the Bureau. As pointed out earlier, the programme of work for the second and third weeks will be discussed and decided by the Bureau in consultation with the chairmen of the working groups this coming Friday. In order to utilize efficiently the available conference resources, I appeal to all members of the Disarmament Commission to be punctual in attending all the scheduled meetings of the Commission.

(The Chairman)

As regards the documentation of the session, I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly (A/46/42), as well as documents listed in the report - particularly the Chairman's papers in the annexes - will serve as important background documents for this session. Of course, previous reports of the Commission will also be useful for reference.

Since there are four items on which there will be intensive deliberations at this session, the Commission may have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on those subjects. I would urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for processing.

(The Chairman)

With respect to the status of the non-governmental organizations, as was the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to attend the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole of the Disarmament Commission as observers.

Having considered the logistics for our session and the various aspects of the organization of work, I should like now to call on those delegations that wish to make general statements on various subjects contained in the agenda at this stage.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): Sir, it is with particular pleasure that I speak today at a time when the Disarmament Commission is starting its 1992 substantive session under your chairmanship. I have had the pleasure of knowing you for many years and I know that the Commission will be in very competent hands.

I avail myself of this opportunity to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and to congratulate him on his appointment. I should also like to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Ambassador Hohenfellner of Austria, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work of the Commission last year. I am convinced, Sir, that this effective stewardship will continue this year under your skilful and experienced chairmanship. Your skill and experience were demonstrated, inter alia, last year when you led the work on objective information on military matters. I can assure you that I shall do my best to carry that work forward and I am sure that you share my hope that it will be brought to a successful conclusion this year.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The end of the cold war and East-West divisions has led to dramatic changes, not only in Europe, but in the whole world. The prospects for disarmament and arms limitation have improved considerably. The issues of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons have increasingly come into focus and are now priorities on the international agenda and considered essential for maintaining peace and security.

These developments have also given the United Nations a new role and new possibilities. This was demonstrated at the Security Council meeting on 31 January this year, at the level of Heads of State and Government, where disarmament and non-proliferation issues were highlighted.

The year 1991 stands out as a most remarkable year in disarmament. For the first time in history, an agreement was reached to reduce the arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons. The START Treaty last summer was followed in the autumn by important unilateral decisions in Washington and Moscow towards further reductions of the levels of nuclear armament. In addition to this, Washington and Moscow, in January this year, made additional important unilateral commitments to disarmament.

These welcome developments have given us a new setting for our deliberations on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been considerably vitalized as a result of a reformed and more focused agenda. During this session, we can benefit from the thorough deliberations undertaken last year, and we can continue efforts to reach consensus in the four working groups.

Before I address the tasks ahead in those groups I would like to offer some remarks on the working methods of this Commission.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The work of the Disarmament Commission is based on the principle of consensus. Consensus does not preclude open debate and fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, it assumes shared responsibility and a joint commitment to common results. This is particularly the case when agreement is reached among an overwhelming majority of States. Thus, I trust that we will all take part in the discussions in a spirit of cooperation and demonstrate that this forum can play a truly constructive role in disarmament.

During the three weeks to come, we will concentrate our work on four essential topics: objective information on military matters, the process of nuclear disarmament, a regional approach to disarmament, and science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament.

As regards the first item, we should now look for consensus on concrete recommendations on general guidelines. I hope it will be possible to conclude our deliberations on the basis of the paper introduced last year by the Chairman of Working Group I, presented "on [his] own responsibility as a working tool". The paper covers four main issues: objectives, principles, scope and mechanisms.

Our discussions this year can be influenced in a positive way by the increased openness and transparency in the nuclear field demonstrated by the major military Powers. The discussions can also be positively affected by the progress under way in the European region, where the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process has strengthened measures of confidence-building.

In this context, I should like to mention that Sweden will continue to provide the United Nations with information on military matters, including figures on military budgets and data on exports of military equipment. It is

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

essential that all countries provide such data. All fields of military activities should be covered by this openness.

The newly established universal register for international trade in heavy conventional weapons - later to be expanded - is a new important instrument which will promote increased openness, transparency and confidence in order to facilitate disarmament.

As regards Working Group II, a number of encouraging events can be reflected under the four sub-items in this area: the relationship between nuclear disarmament, peace and security; steps taken in the process of nuclear disarmament; strengthening the process of nuclear disarmament; and the role of the United Nations in the process of nuclear disarmament.

The process has indeed been reinforced since the previous session of the Disarmament Commission beginning with the signing of the START agreement in Moscow last year and with far-reaching unilateral declarations aiming at lower levels of nuclear armament. These declarations demonstrate a readiness among the major Powers to assume greater responsibility for creating a world in which the threat of nuclear war is considerably reduced.

Now ratification of the START Treaty and concrete action is urgently required. It is Sweden's hope that we soon shall see a prompt removal and destruction of nuclear arms in accordance with the START Treaty and the far-reaching unilateral declarations made by the United States and the former Soviet Union and Russia.

The international community expects that nuclear issues in the Commonwealth of Independent States will not be pursued to improve bargaining positions for States where nuclear weapons are deployed. Thus, we hope for a cooperative spirit on the part of the States concerned and encourage Ukraine,

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

Belarus and Kazakhstan to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon States as early as possible.

My Government is pleased to note that China has ratified the NPT and welcomes the announcement that France will also soon adhere to the Treaty.

Non-proliferation and the importance of strengthening and extending the Non-Proliferation Treaty as long as possible after 1995 is of the utmost importance. These are questions which have gained particular importance in view of events in the Commonwealth of Independent States and other areas during the last 12 months.

A comprehensive nuclear-test ban remains a priority among nuclear issues. Sweden has presented a draft proposal for a treaty and looks forward to a sincere and constructive treatment of this matter in the Conference on Disarmament.

In this context, I would like to express Sweden's satisfaction at the announcement by France of a moratorium on further underground testing during 1992.

All in all, I trust that our discussions on this agenda item can be constructive and that a foundation can be laid for concluding our deliberations on this matter next year.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The third substantive issue on our agenda covers regional disarmament. It is our understanding from consultations preceeding this session that the Chairman of Working Group III intends to focus the discussions on the relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament, as well as principles and guidelines. The other topics will be taken up if time permits. I believe that this approach is a wise one, given the wide scope of the subject-matter.

Regional disarmament is required to promote global disarmament - and vice versa. The two issues are two sides of the same problem. The importance of regional disarmament has been further highlighted by tensions and instability in and between nations in the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

There are no universal solutions as regards regional disarmament. They can take many forms, as shown in Europe by the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). It is to be hoped that lessons learned in that process could help and inspire other regions. It is encouraging that increased transparency and openness in Europe are setting new patterns for cooperation among nations in the region, some of which have been adversaries for decades or even centuries.

In order to promote confidence-building measures, appropriate verification instruments should be used in a more systematic manner, at both the regional and global levels. Such instruments should also cover the seas and outer space.

In the Working Group IV, discussions will focus on science and technology for disarmament. During the last session of the Commission, Sweden and many other countries stressed the importance of using science and technology for the benefit of disarmament. Technology in itself is neutral, although it can be used for both constructive and destructive purposes. Verification techniques - including the seismic competence employed by my country and

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

others to detect nuclear testing - are examples of positive contributions of science and technology to disarmament.

The conversion of military resources to civilian needs may, given the political changes in many regions, be another area where science and technology can be used to promote disarmament.

In order to strengthen non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, formal agreements and control regimes have become a necessity. They are in themselves not a guarantee against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It is Sweden's firm view that export controls of this type are not to be regarded as arbitrary barriers to trade. These controls are for surveillance purposes and should not be detrimental to those who need technology and technological products for peaceful purposes. As a nation truly dependent on foreign trade Sweden has no intention to erect unnecessary barriers, nor any interest in so doing.

It is my sincere hope that we will successfully conclude our deliberations on the first substantive item on our agenda during this session and be in a position to select a new item to be dealt with during the three years 1993-1995.

As I emphasized at the outset, the issues of non-proliferation have moved to the top of the agenda for disarmament and arms limitation. It is therefore very topical that informal consultations are being conducted in Geneva regarding the possible role of the Conference on Disarmament in this context. It seems to my delegation that the Disarmament Commission should also have a role to play in this matter, as there is a need to elaborate general guidelines on non-proliferation. The Commission has, as will be recalled, been charged with similar tasks in regard to other issues, most recently regarding objective information on military matters.

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The problems of non-proliferation concern both conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, but the latter pose a more serious threat than the former. This view is also in consonance with established priorities in the field of multilateral disarmament and arms limitation.

Against this background the Swedish delegation proposes that a new item be added to the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, namely General guidelines for non-proliferation, with special emphasis on weapons of mass destruction.

I hope that this proposal will be favourably considered and eventually adopted by the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I share the confidence of the representative of Sweden that this year we shall be able to conduct a substantive session not only in words but in deeds.

Mr. Chong-Ha YOO (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the current session of the Disarmament Commission and thank you also for your kind words welcoming new members. We are confident that your well-proven leadership and expertise in the work of the United Nations, especially in the area of disarmament, will guide our deliberations to a successful end. I join the representative of Sweden in congratulating Mr. Petrovsky on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and have confidence that he will perform his duties capably and effectively commensurate with the importance of his job at this critical juncture in the role of the United Nations. As this is the first time that my delegation participates in the work of the Commission as a full member, I assure you, Sir, of our utmost cooperation and support.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission takes place at a time of momentous change in international relations at the global, regional and

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

local levels. The end of the cold war has brought with it many new challenges and opportunities in the fields of disarmament and international security. The statement made at the Security Council meeting of 31 January 1992, at the level of Heads of State and Government, underlined this point, particularly with respect to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction that the new reform measures adopted by consensus by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session have allowed the Commission to focus on the four substantive agenda items of high priority. These measures have already provided a useful framework for our deliberation.

As we enter the second year of deliberations since the initiation of the reforms, my delegation is hopeful that the Commission, through collective efforts, will be able to function more effectively, thereby making substantial progress in the discussion of the items before us.

In recent years, the importance of exchanging objective information on military matters is receiving growing recognition. In this period of global transition following the cold war, this subject takes on even greater significance as a central element of confidence- and security-building measures.

Since the uncertainty and unpredictability inherent in international relations, particularly in regions of high tension and conflict, constitute a main source of instability, the importance of openness and transparency in the military area cannot be overemphasized.

The provision, compilation and exchange of objective information on military matters will certainly increase the level of openness and transparency, and thus contribute to easing tension among States and strengthening regional and global security. In this regard, we were pleased

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

to witness several recent initiatives taken at the unilateral, bilateral and regional levels.

With regard to the Disarmament Commission's work this year, my delegation believes that the previous Chairman's text on "Guidelines for objective information on military matters", contained in the Commission's report, will serve as an important basis for further discussion. Since this is the final year in which to conclude our deliberations on this subject, we sincerely hope that our unsparing efforts will produce a finalized consensus text.

Within the United Nations, some important initiatives have already been taken in this regard. The annual reporting system on military expenditures has been established, and many Member States submit their reports according to this system.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/36 L, which calls for the establishment of a universal and non-discriminatory register of international arms transfers. In accordance with that resolution, the register was established at the United Nations in January of this year. In view of the worthy intentions for establishing the register and of the overwhelming support for the resolution, my delegation looks forward to universal participation in the register so that it may properly serve as a global confidence- and security-building measure.

My Government, in its effort to contribute to confidence-building in our part of the world, has annually issued a white paper on national defence since 1988. The paper contains, inter alia, our defence policy, military budget and military capabilities, both human and material. We are also preparing to submit information on our military expenditures in accordance with the United Nations standardized reporting system.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. While the progress in nuclear disarmament is not yet satisfactory and has yet to be accelerated, we welcome several positive developments which have taken place in recent years at the global, regional and bilateral levels.

My country also welcomes the unilateral initiatives on the reduction of nuclear arsenals, particularly those taken by the leaders of the United States and the Russian Federation, respectively, in January of this year, in addition to their previous initiatives taken last year.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

Since these two countries bear special responsibilities, we hope that they will further endeavour to transform the decades-long nuclear arms race into a disarmament race.

With respect to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we cannot overemphasize the importance of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). My Government believes that the non-proliferation Treaty constitutes a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and has contributed significantly to international peace and security. In this regard, we welcome the recent accession of many States to the Treaty, including that of China last month. With the forthcoming adherence of France, we move ever closer to the goal of universal adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty.

While a new international environment has made possible significant strides towards alleviating the threat of a nuclear holocaust, the rapid transformation in the political map of the Eurasian continent and the recent Gulf War have caused new concerns regarding problems with the maintenance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Gulf War in particular highlighted the following problems with regard to the current nuclear non-proliferation regime: the limited scope of the existing safeguards system administered by the IAEA; the inability of satellite reconnaissance and other national technical means of verification to detect undeclared nuclear facilities; and the limitation of national export controls.

In this regard, my Government welcomes the ongoing efforts of the IAEA to strengthen its safeguards system and recalls that the Agency reaffirmed its right to undertake special inspections during its Board of Governors meeting this past February. We also take note of the statement of the Security Council issued at the conclusion of the summit meeting in January that the

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

Council would take appropriate measures in the case of any violations notified to it by the IAEA.

As bipolar confrontation at the global level recedes, growing attention is being focused on approaches to disarmament. Given the pertinence and timeliness of the subject, the agenda item "regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security" aroused considerable interest among delegations at last year's session. Such widespread interest resulted in a compilation of important elements on the issue, reflected in the Chairman's paper annexed to the Commission's report to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

While divergent views and varied constructive proposals have been put forward, we are nevertheless able to identify some common elements. In this regard, my delegation views last year's General Assembly resolution 46/36 F, entitled "Regional disarmament, including confidence-building measures" - a resolution which was adopted by consensus - as a guide post.

The resolution, which my country had the privilege to co-sponsor, provides, inter alia, that, first, the regional and global approaches to disarmament complement each other; secondly, the regional approach to disarmament is one of the essential elements in the global process of disarmament; thirdly, it is important that regional disarmament measures are taken at the initiative of States of the region and with the participation of all States concerned, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region; and fourthly, confidence-building measures are important in ensuring the success of this process. In addition to the above-mentioned elements, we would like to emphasize that regional arrangements should be determined freely by the States concerned in the region.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

In this regard, many ideas have recently been put forward concerning the possibility of applying the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on regional disarmament to the Asia-Pacific region.

In our view, however, it may be still premature to apply the European experience directly to the Asia-Pacific region, owing, among other things, to the political, economic and cultural diversity of the region, as well as the contextual differences of inter-State relations. For this reason, we see merit in the evolutionary approach to regional disarmament in our part of the world, an approach which starts with confidence-building measures and the improvement of political and other relations among the States concerned.

In line with what I have mentioned above, my delegation is pleased to report to this Commission on the recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. After a series of difficult negotiations, South and North Korea reached two important Agreements which could mark a breakthrough in their long-standing confrontation since the division of the Korean Peninsula. These are the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North" and the "Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula". Both Agreements came into force in February this year.

The Reconciliation Agreement, which we refer to as the Basic Agreement, provides, among other things, for the recognition of each other's system, renunciation of the use of force and armed aggression, confidence-building and arms-control measures, economic cooperation, exchange of people and the establishment of various bodies that will implement the follow-up measures. This Agreement, if implemented in good faith, will serve as a basic charter that will promote peaceful coexistence between South and North Korea with the ultimate goal of unification.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

The Joint Denuclearization Declaration follows my Government's "Special Announcement of a Nuclear-free Korean Peninsula" of last December and its "Non-Nuclear Korean Peninsula Peace Initiative" of the preceding month. The Joint Declaration commits the two parts of Korea not to produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons. It also includes the pledges of both parties not to have nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities, which represents a major complement to an IAEA type of safeguards agreement.

To verify the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, both parties agreed to conduct mutual inspections in accordance with procedures to be determined by the Joint Nuclear Control Commission. It was agreed during the recent meetings of that Commission that the first mutual inspection would be conducted by early June.

The most immediate task which remains to be worked out is an agreement on the procedures and modalities of mutual inspection, which would provide more in-depth and comprehensive inspection than is allowed for in the IAEA arrangements. My Government has proposed to submit both civilian and military facilities to mutual inspections under the principle of reciprocity. Our proposal is based on the firm belief that, without an effective and reliable inspection regime, such agreement cannot function properly. We are looking forward to an early agreement on the implementation of the mutual inspection as set forth in the Joint Declaration.

My delegation cannot fail to mention the importance of North Korea's recent ratification of the IAEA safeguards agreement. Despite a six-year delay, we welcome North Korea's signing and ratifying of the safeguards agreement with IAEA which we hope will be followed by immediate inspection.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

We have no illusion that the implementation of all these agreements with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be free of difficulties in the paths ahead. But once multilateral and bilateral arrangements with regard to nuclear inspection have been fully agreed upon and implemented to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, this will not only lay a firm ground for greater confidence-building measures on the Korean Peninsula, but could also set an important example for other regions with similar conditions.

During last year's session, different aspects of the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields were identified during the course of discussion. While some delegations focused on the negative impact of science and technology on the international security environment, other delegations pointed to their positive aspects, such as verification, weapons disposal, restructuring of former weapons industries and protection of the environment.

It is true that, until very recently, scientific and technological fields were often the sites of cold war confrontation, where all too many efforts focused on the development of ever-more sophisticated weapons and thereby merely propelled the arms race spiral.

(Mr. Yoo, Republic of Korea)

Now, in a new world of reconciliation and cooperation, we should use our scientific knowledge and technical expertise to enhance the well-being of humankind and to reduce real and perceived threats. Science and technology are becoming inherent elements in the comprehensive search for a new international order of peace, security and cooperation.

My delegation firmly believes that this is the most opportune time to discuss ways and means of accelerating the process of disarmament, and that this Commission can serve as both a catalyst and a clearing-house of ideas. My delegation stands ready to play its necessary part in achieving concrete results.

The CHAIRMAN: The statement that we have just heard from the representative of the Republic of Korea gives me the opportunity to recall that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea have recently joined the United Nations family. We extend a welcome to them. We are ready to cooperate with both countries most closely during the Commission's substantive session.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I remind delegations that there is a deadline of 1 p.m. today for the inscription of names on the speakers' list. I invite delegations that may be ready to speak earlier than they had planned to do so in order to help us rebalance our list of speakers; the list today is rather short, but tomorrow we shall have quite a number of statements to listen to. Therefore, it will make our lives easier if delegations that felt ready to do so would consider advancing the time for making their statements from tomorrow to this afternoon.

(The Chairman)

I remind the Group of African States that it has to come up with their nomination for Chairman of Working Group IV.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.